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Toponymic education and practice and international cooperation: training courses in toponymy

Toponymic training course sponsored by the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names held in Batu, Malang, East Java, Indonesia, 11-23 September 2005

Submitted by Indonesia***

Indonesia held a training course in Batu, a resort town west of the city of Malang (East Java Province) from 11 to 23 September 2005. This was the third training course to have been held in Indonesia since 1982. It was co-organized by the National Institute of Technology at Malang (ITN Malang) under the auspices of the Asia South-East and Pacific South-West Division and the Working Group on Training Courses in Toponymy of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names. The duration of the training was three weeks. Forty participants from Australia, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Brunei Darussalam, Timor-Leste and Indonesia participated in the training, which consisted of one week of classroom lectures, one week of fieldwork devoted to collecting names through the interviewing of local people in order to obtain names and their meaning, and one week of office treatment and database creation. At the end of the training, each participant brought home the database that had been created by the participants themselves.

The area of training was the "Singosari" district, famous in connection with the Hindu kingdom era in East Java, as it had been the seat of the Singosari kingdom preceding the mighty Majapahit kingdom (1293-1522) north of Singosari. The area is rich in historical names and the names collected in the area remind many people of the Sanskrit names in the Hindu epic.

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This three-week training module would become a standard training module in Indonesia in the development of manpower for the autonomous provinces, sub-provinces and municipalities, in response to the increasing needs of the regions pursuant to the enactment of Presidential Regulation No. 112-2006. This is being achieved within the framework of the decentralization of government functions in respect of geographical naming and related activities of database creation for the region.

Topics presented at the training course were, among others, the need for national standardization of geographical names, language issues, cartography and geographical names, international issues, toponymic data files, the database and gazetteer, and the United Nations Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names and the resolutions adopted thereat.